

ECX sled dog race canceled for 2021

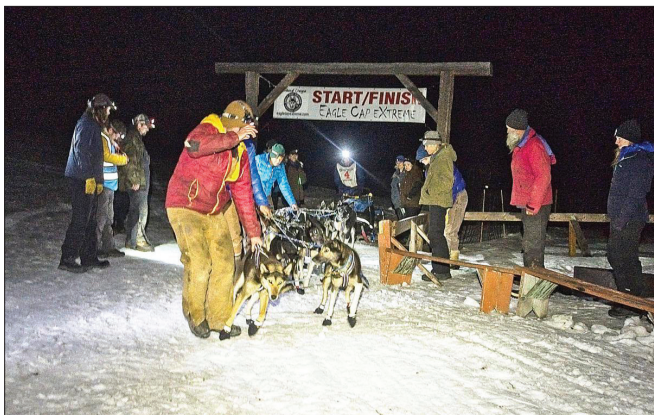
By Bill Bradshaw

Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — The 2021 Eagle Cap Extreme sled dog race, originally scheduled for January, has been canceled because of the COVID-19 pandemic, according to the ECX website.

“After considerable discussion with medical professionals, community leaders, and several key volunteers in the Eagle Cap Extreme family, we made the difficult decision to postpone our 2021 races,” the website states. “We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause and look forward to resuming with the 2022 race.”

Dr. Randy Greenshields, president of the ECX board of directors and co-owner of the Double Arrow Veterinary Clinic, said the board decided on Nov. 23 to cancel next month’s event because of concerns over keeping people socially distanced. He said organizers have been busy getting the word out to all the mushers and volunteers.



Ellen Morris Bishop/Wallowa County Chieftain, File
Gabe Durham’s team of 12 sled dogs crosses the finish line to win the 200-mile race at the 2020 Eagle Cap Extreme in Wallowa County. This year, organizers canceled the event due to COVID-19.

“We had a lot of volunteers who were pretty uncomfortable with (holding the ECX),” he said Wednesday, Dec. 2. “We’d already planned to cancel events where people were in close proximity.”

He said although distancing wasn’t a problem for the mushers, it would’ve been for spectators and anyone attending the awards banquet and people in warming tents and eating and sleeping areas.

“It was just real difficult to keep people spread out,” he said.

Communications were another problem. Given the terrain involved in the race, cellphones aren’t usable and ham radios are used, again crowding people together.

“There would be too many people in close proximity to do it very safely,” Greenshields said.

Information on the website already has been changed to reflect plans for

the 2022 race. Greenshields said some of the mushers who planned to compete next month said rather than refund their entry fees, the ECX organization should just hold onto the fees until 2022.

“We had a ton of people wanting to race this year but it’s not to be,” he said. “It’s a really cool event. Just not this year, unfortunately.”

According to the website, the 200-mile, 12-dog team race is an official qualifier for both the Iditarod and the Yukon Quest races. Races of shorter lengths also were held last year: a 100-mile eight dog team race, a 31-mile two-day mid-distance race and a 22-mile junior’s race featuring 14- to 17-year-old racers.

The ECX team provides a premier sporting event for mushers and their teams through some of the most scenic and rugged country in the U.S. The race runs through the Hells Canyon National Recreation Area and the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest adjacent to the Eagle Cap Wilderness.

Former Tiger named Star of the Week

By Kaleb Lay

The Observer

LOGAN, Utah — Former La Grande High School standout ball-player Andrew Peasley, who made his debut start under center for the Utah State Aggies last week, was named a Manning Star of the Week on Monday, Nov. 30.

Peasley, who led the Aggies to their first win

of the season with a stellar four-touchdown performance Nov. 26 against the New Mexico Lobos, was one of eight college quarterbacks, including those of powerhouses the Alabama Crimson Tide and Clemson Tigers, to receive the honor.

Look for a full feature on the former La Grande Tiger in the Observer’s Tuesday, Dec. 8 edition.

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No. 21 Oregon looks to rebound

By Janie McCauley

Associated Press

BERKELEY, Calif. — Oregon’s mistakes and costly turnovers on offense are perplexing for third-year coach Mario Cristobal, because it just hasn’t been this way in recent seasons.

Five lost fumbles and four interceptions in four games. The Ducks have discussed the problems as a team, as position units.

“That is one of the more disappointing things. We’ve been really good about not turning the ball over here for a couple of years,” Cristobal said. “This year we’ve gotten careless. ... The things that have caused it have been mental effort-oriented, detail-oriented that can and will be eliminated with work and more effort and more attention to detail. Those things are frustrating, they’re disappointing and our players are upset about it.”

Oregon (3-1) will try to clean up the miscues and learn from a 41-38 loss to rival Oregon State last week that dropped the Ducks from ninth in the AP poll to No. 21. The loss cost the Ducks whatever shot they had at a spot in the College Football Playoff after they had been ranked 15th in the first CFP rankings but are now 23rd.

The realistic goal now as they prepare to face California on Saturday is a Pac-12 championship.

The winless Golden Bears (0-3) have had their own issues with special teams. They had a would-be tying extra point attempt blocked in the waning moments of a 24-23 loss to rival Stanford in the Big Game last Friday in Berkeley.

The next daunting test on their home field is with the Ducks, who are coming off their demoralizing late defeat.

Oregon quarterback Tyler Shough threw for 266 yards and two touchdowns with two interceptions last week. He has four interceptions in all.

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